

Using the *Writing Policy Guidance Tool*

The categories of the *Writing Policy Guidance Tool* are based on the requirements listed in Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), 2009. “A school’s policy for the writing program shall address the use of the portfolio for determining a student’s performance in: **communications, grading procedures and feedback to students regarding their writing and communication skills, the responsibility for review of the portfolios and feedback to students; other policies to improve the quality of an individual student’s writing and communication skills.**” SB 1, 2009, Sec 2 (7)(c)(5)

- The essential components of each category appear in the left column of the document under the **Description** heading.
- The middle column with the heading **Essential items addressed?** includes **yes** and **no** options.
- The third column, under the heading, **If no, possible reason**, includes descriptive bullets, plus one *Other* category, to indicate deficiencies not specifically listed in the bullets provided.

When using this tool to identify the strengths and weakness of a school’s writing policy -

- Read the school’s policy.
- Highlight *yes* or *no* in the middle column of the *Writing Policy Guidance Tool*.
- If *no* is highlighted, move to the third column and highlight the bullet that best describes the contents of the school’s plan. (NOTE: The highlighted information will guide the school in determining what is missing from its policy, or what needs to be more specifically articulated.)
- A *Comments* space is included at the bottom of each category section for notes or comments that can provide additional feedback or guidance.

This tool begins on page 2 of this document.

The last column of this document is for schools to use as they think about how the descriptors are addressed in a school’s writing plan. Although the plan is not submitted with the policy, the additional column in the *Tool* will help schools think about instructional and curricular decisions.

District	School	Date
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Writing Policy Guidance Tool

“Each school-based decision making council, or if there is not a council, a committee appointed by the principal shall adopt policies that determine the writing program for its school and submit it to the Department of Education for review and comment.” Senate Bill 1, 2009, Sec 2(7)(c)(2)

#1 - Communication Skills “The writing program shall incorporate a variety of language resources, technological tools, and multiple opportunities for students to develop complex communication skills for a variety of purposes.” Sec (7)(c)(2)			
Description	Essential items addressed?	If no, possible reason	Moving Forward - How is this addressed in our writing plan?
a. Cross-curricular writing and communication instruction <u>In the Communication Skills section of X High School's writing policy, it says, “Students shall be actively engaged in using communication skills regularly in every class across all grades and content areas.”</u>	Yes No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not addressed Suggested cross-curricular writing and communication instruction limits student/teacher choice and/or possibilities for real-world application OTHER: 	
b. Technological tools to assist students in being creative and innovative members of a global society	Essential items addressed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not addressed Limited use of current technologies by students to deepen content knowledge 	

<u>In the Communication Skills section and the Feedback section of the policy, it indicates that students “will use multi-media within their writing samples”; they will create electronic/digital publications; and they will “utilize 21st century technologies to support the teaching of communications and writing standards.”</u>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>OTHER:</p>	
<p>c. Opportunities for students to build oral and written communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts</p> <p><u>In the Communication Skills section of the policy, it says, “Instruction in writing for publication shall be organized to address a variety of audiences and purposes and shall represent the growth and interests of students over time.”</u></p> <p><u>In that same section, the policy also indicates that “publication will include writing and delivering speeches.”</u></p>	<p>Essential items addressed?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed • Limited variety of forms and/or contexts for communication • No/limited opportunities to build students’ oral communication skills • OTHER: 	
<p>d. Opportunities for students to develop real-world and creative samples of communication appropriate for meeting</p>	<p>Essential items addressed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed • Suggested opportunities for students to develop communication samples lack 	



<p>content standards</p> <p><u>In the Communication Skills section of the policy, it says, "Instruction in writing for publication shall be organized to address a variety of audiences and purposes and shall represent the growth and interests of students over time."</u></p> <p><u>That same section also indicates that "publication will include writing and delivering speeches, use of multi-media... and electronic/digital publications."</u></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>real-world authenticity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested opportunities for students to develop communication samples do not support content learning • OTHER: 	
<p>Comments:</p> <p><u>The policy addresses opportunities for students to use 3 categories of writing: <i>writing to learn, writing to demonstrate learning and writing for publication</i>. It's important to keep in mind that a policy aligned with KCAS will include also reference to the three text types addressed in the standards: <i>argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative</i>. While writing to learn and writing to demonstrate learning are a part of the learning process, the evidence that students can apply what they are learning will be demonstrated in their collections in authentic text types for authentic audiences and purposes.</u></p>			



2 - Use of Feedback on Writing and Communications

“Descriptive feedback can focus on strengths or weaknesses; feedback is most effective when it points out strengths in the work as well as areas needing improvement.”

Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it right – using it well. Rick Stiggins et al.

“When we use assessment to meet students’ informational needs while there is still time for them to take action on the information to influence the final grade, we increase students’ motivation to achieve.”

Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing it right – using it well. Rick Stiggins et al.

Description	Essential items addressed?	If no, possible reason	Moving Forward - How is this addressed in our writing plan?
<p>a. Use of descriptive feedback by teachers and students to improve student learning</p> <p><u>The Feedback section of the policy states that teachers will “provide students regular feedback (e.g. conferencing, descriptive feedback, electronic comments, rubrics) about their writing throughout the writing process...”</u></p> <p><u>The same section also indicates that students will self-assess with reflection.</u></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed • The language used to describe feedback strategies does not specifically suggest the use of descriptive feedback. • OTHER: 	
<p>b. Opportunities for students to use feedback to reflect on their writing/communication and their progress as communicators</p> <p><u>The Feedback section of the policy states that students will self assess with reflection.</u></p>	<p>Essential items addressed?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed • Limited opportunities for students to use feedback to reflect on their progress as communicators • OTHER: 	



c. Opportunities for students to self-assess and to provide feedback on the work of others <u>The policy does not address opportunities for students to provide feedback to others.</u>	Essential items addressed? Yes No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not addressed Limited opportunities for students to self-assess Limited opportunities for students to provide feedback on the work of others OTHER: 	
Comments: <u>The school simply needs to broaden the policy to include student opportunities for providing feedback. Feedback should not just be limited to teachers. It can also include other conference and feedback partners in the school, family and community.</u>			
<p align="center"># 3 - Review and Instructional Use of Portfolios</p> <p>“Writing portfolios shall remain a required and important instructional tool, but shall not be included in the accountability index.” Sec 16</p> <p>“Writing portfolios, consisting of samples of individual student work that represent the interests and growth of the student over time, shall be a required part of any writing program in primary through grade twelve.” Sec 2(7)(c)(3)</p> <p>“A writing portfolio shall be maintained for each student and follow each student from grade to grade and to any school in which the student may enroll.” Sec 2(7)(c)(4)</p>			
Description	Essential items addressed?	If no, possible reason	Moving Forward - How is this addressed in our writing plan?
a. The use of the portfolio as a collection of individual student’s work that reflects his or her interests and growth over time in ability to communicate to a variety of audiences for a variety of purposes	Yes No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not addressed OR parts are not addressed Portfolio collections suggested in policy limit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> student choice and interest authentic forms of 	



<p><u>While the policy does address students writing for a variety of audiences and purposes, it does not directly address the issue of student interest and choice.</u></p>		<p>communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opportunities to learn • Portfolio collections suggested do not demonstrate variety of audiences and/or purposes • OTHER: <u>Issues of student choice and interest are not addressed in the policy.</u> 	
<p>b. How the portfolio collections will be analyzed to inform whole class and whole school instructional strengths and areas of need for the writing program</p> <p><u>The policy indicates that a team will review portfolios regularly to determine instructional planning for the next school year – which is summative assessment. However, in the Portfolio Analysis section of this school’s policy, it indicates that “analysis of these instructional portfolios shall be used to inform classroom and whole school instructional strengths and areas of need.”</u></p>	<p>Essential items addressed?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed • Suggested portfolio analysis will not inform classroom instructional needs • Suggested portfolio analysis will not inform school-wide instructional needs • OTHER: <u>There needs to be a clarifying modification including on-going, formative analysis by all teachers, not just an end-of-year analysis by the literacy team.</u> 	
<p>c. The collection and management of student portfolios, whether paper or digital, for all grades within the school as well as between</p>	<p>Essential items addressed?</p> <p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not addressed OR parts are not addressed • Most parts are addressed – but only for paper portfolios 	



<p>schools</p> <p>Active participation by students in decisions made about what to include and what to purge from portfolios, to ensure that portfolios maintain reflection of growth and student interest</p> <p>Selections in collection reflect alignment with KCAS</p> <p><u>The policy indicates, in the last sentence, that “at regular intervals...students shall submit their best work for review.” It does not address how students will be involved in making decisions about what to keep in their collection, and how student analysis of the contents of their own portfolios will contribute to their learning and growing as writers.</u></p>	<p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most parts are addressed but students’ active participation in the process is not addressed • OTHER: 	
<p>Comments:</p>			

# 4 - Implementation of the Writing Program			
Description	Essential items addressed?	If no, possible reason	Moving Forward - How is this addressed in our writing plan?
a. How the school's curriculum is aligned to the Kentucky Core Academic Standards The alignment to KCAS is only mentioned in the Development heading of the policy, but is not addressed in any way in the other sections.	Yes <u>No</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not addressed <u>Partially addressed</u> OTHER: 	
b. How on-going and embedded professional learning supports the school's writing program This is not addressed in the policy.	Essential items addressed? Yes <u>No</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Not addressed</u> Professional learning as described in the policy is not embedded or on-going OTHER: 	
c. How school administration and leadership supports the school's writing program The role of administration in the school's writing program is not addressed.	Essential items addressed? Yes <u>No</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Not addressed</u> Administration and/or leadership supports addressed in the policy are limited OTHER: 	
Comments:			



<p>Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do policies regarding grading procedures support or hinder students' use of feedback to continue their learning? • Are technology policies aligned to support the school's writing & communications program? • Are there other policies in place that may hinder successful implementation of the school's writing program? • Do policies include opportunities for students and their families to interact and collaborate with the school on students' literacy progress and products? 	
<p>Comments: These polices should be included if they are relevant to the effectiveness of the school's writing program.</p>	

